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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

Friday, January 20, 1939

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "More Questions" Nutrition and Cookery, Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

--ooOoo--

Of the answering of questions there is no end---at least that's the way it seems to the people in the Bureau of Home Economics in Washington.

The Bureau mailbag continues to be packed full of question-letters every day---in fact the number of queries received runs into tens of thousands every year. It seems homemakers are more eager than ever to get straight scientific answers to some of their practical problems in feeding the family.

A friend of mine has figures up that for every homemaker who wants to know something badly enough to write a letter about it, there are 200 others who are nearly as anxious to know the answer. I guess my friend is better at psychology than statistics.

Anyway, to help along those "others who want to know"---certainly there are thousands of them---the Bureau is sending out a set of ready-made answers to some of the questions that are most popular just now.

The first two questions are especially timely, when so many of us are checking up on winter diets.

The first question is, "Are home-canned tomatoes a good source of vitamin C?"

And the answer is, "Yes, home-canned tomatoes are a good source of vitamin C, if you can them the right way. For canning, the hot or cold pack methods are best. Scientific tests show that you lose little if any vitamin C by either of these methods. But if you can tomatoes from the open kettle you will lose more vitamin C, because the hot tomatoes are exposed to the air longer. Heat and air, especially the two together, are hard on vitamin C.

But no matter how you can tomatoes, the acid they contain helps save much of their vitamin C content. This explains why canned tomatoes have so much more vitamin C than other canned vegetables.

The second question is about tomato juice. "Is it true that canned tomato juice loses its vitamin C if it stands overnight after you open it?"

And the answer is, No, not if you treat it with respect--that is if you cover the juice and keep it in a cold part of the refrigerator. If you keep the opened tomato juice below 45 degrees Fahrenheit, you don't have to worry about losing its vitamin C for 3 or 4 days.

Next are a couple of questions on how to make the most of the meat you buy. Probably this questioner was wanting a little help with the food budget after the

holidays.

The first part of her question is, "When you roast meat, does searing help to hold in the juices?"

The answer is decidedly in the negative. In fact, it leans over backward and says searing drives the juices out, instead of holding them in. You'll find you have more juice in a tender roast, if you keep your oven at a moderate, even temperature from start to finish. Say, keep your oven at 300 degrees Fahrenheit. And don't overcook the meat.

And the second part is also on roasting,---about the pan. Should there be a cover or not?

No cover, not for tender meats, is the answer. Here's the motto for tender roasts, "Use no cover, add no water." Strangely enough you'll have more juice in the meat if you follow this motto. For you get steam when you use a cover or add water, and steam draws the juices out of the meat.

Next here's a question on meringue. It seems the gentle art of making high, fluffy meringues that stay high and fluffy, isn't exactly second nature to all cooks. Here's the question, "Why is it the meringue on my lemon pie always shrinks and gets watery when I take it out of the oven?"

And the answer is, Probably you have too hot an oven when you bake meringue, so the top turns golden brown, while part of the egg foam is still raw and watery. Meringue will generally be cooked enough to hold its shape if you bake it in a very moderate oven for 20 minutes. That is, keep the oven at about 325 degrees Fahrenheit. But if you like to pile your meringue as high as you can, better use a slower fire than this--say 300 degrees or less--- and bake it longer, perhaps about half an hour.

And here are two ideas on how to make a meringue foam stand up better. First, add a few grains of salt to the egg whites when you start beating them.

And the second idea for a better meringue foam is the same one you use in angel food cake making. It is the use of cream of tartar or lemon juice. If you add a small amount of acid in this way you will have more foam and the foam will be more tender, and it will also stand up better than it will without the acid. But if you use acid don't use too much. For instance, if you use three egg whites in making a meringue, it will be about right to use 1 teaspoon of lemon juice or 1/4 teaspoon of cream of tartar.

And, of course, it's always important to get just the right proportion of sugar in your meringue. Two tablespoons for each egg white generally works best.

That's all the questions and answers I have time for today.

